

MASSACHUSETTS
COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND
THIRTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT



FOR THE YEAR ENDED NOVEMBER 30, 1919

BOSTON
WRIGHT & POTTER PRINTING CO., STATE PRINTERS
32 DERNE STREET
1920



Working in competition with the seeing. One armed blind man denting caps for fuses,
Merrill Manufacturing Company.

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PUBLICATION OF THIS DOCUMENT
APPROVED BY THE
SUPERVISOR OF ADMINISTRATION.

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND.

CHARLES B. HAYES of Brookline, <i>Director</i> ,	.	.	Term ends 1923
WALTER B. SNOW of Watertown, <i>Secretary</i> ,	.	.	Term ends 1921
Mrs. WILLIAM W. TAFF of Brookline,	.	.	Term ends 1920
EDWARD E. ALLEN of Watertown,	.	.	Term ends 1923
JOHN P. REYNOLDS of Boston,	.	.	Term ends 1922
JOHN D. W. BODFISH of Hyannis,	.	.	Term ends 1924

Regular meetings of the Commission are held on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month, at 4 Park Street, Boston.

Telephone, Haymarket 831.

Private branch exchanges connecting central office and the Cambridge workshops, listed under Massachusetts Commission for the Blind. Office, Haymarket 831, and Industries, Cambridge 5753.

Agents.

FLORENCE W. BIRCHARD, *Superintendent of Employment in Competition with the Seeing.*

IDA E. RIDGEWAY, *Supervisor of Work for Children.*

FRANCIS B. IERARDI,¹ *Field Worker.*

HELEN E. JOWDERS, *Field Worker.*

MARY W. RICHARDSON, *Field Worker.*

ROSE E. TRAINOR,¹ *Field Worker for Conservation of Eyesight.*

FRED V. WALSH,¹ *Field Worker.*

LOUISE C. WRIGHT, *Assistant to Superintendent of Employment.*

GEORGE S. MANSFIELD, *Sales Agent.*

HELEN F. O'LEARY, *Accountant.*

I. CENTRAL OFFICE.

The central office is located at 4 Park Street, Boston.

Applications may be made at the central office: (1) for information in regard to the various general and special agencies already organized which may be utilized for the benefit of the blind; (2) for home teachers' instruction; (3) for employment; (4) for educational and

¹ Blind.

industrial aid; (5) for the sale of products; (6) for the co-operation in care of children's cases not already provided for by the Nursery for Blind Babies and the Perkins Institution; and (7) for information and co-operation in non-medical work for prevention of blindness and conservation of eyesight.

II. EMPLOYMENT.

There are three general divisions into which the possibilities of employment of the blind naturally fall: (1) among the seeing, either along professional lines, in offices, in shops or otherwise; (2) in shops for the blind; (3) in home industries or individual occupations.

Applications for employment will be carefully considered and every effort made to secure suitable work for the applicant. In the first case, personal effort of one of the Commission's representatives will be made on behalf of the applicant. In the second, a position will be secured when possible. In the third, suitable training may be provided by the Commission, at its discretion and under such conditions as it shall determine. (See "Shop Schools and Industrial Classes.")

III. SALESROOM FOR HOME AND SHOP PRODUCTS OF BLIND LABOR, 4 PARK STREET, BOSTON.

All articles made in the home must be submitted for inspection and must come up to reasonable standards as regards style and workmanship. Original applications for the consignment of home work should be made at the Commission's office.

FLORENCE E. CUMMINGS, *Manager, Salesroom.*

IV. CAMBRIDGE INDUSTRIES.

Cambridge Rug and "Wundermop" Shop, 686 Massachusetts Avenue (Central Square).

JAMES T. COLE, *Superintendent.*

HUBERT DURDLÉ, *Manager, Rug Shop.*

K. R. SMITH,¹ *Foreman, Mop Shop.*

Broom Shop, 13 Brookline Street.

F. J. PIPER, *Manager.*

Willow Shop, 347 Green Street.

WILLIAM A. WOJCIK, *Foreman.*

V. WOOLSON HOUSE INDUSTRIES.

Woolson House Industries for Women, 277 Harvard Street (corner of Inman). Hand-weaving, chair reseatng, etc.

H. FRANCES LEWIS, *Manager.*

¹ Blind or partially blind workers.

VI. "M. C. B." SHOPS.

Pittsfield. — 30 Eagle Street.

WILLIAM L. FOLEY,¹ *Managing Foreman.*

NELSON A. FOOT, *Clerk.*

Lowell. — 159 Moody Street.

HENRY G. BURKE,¹ *Foreman.*

HARRIETT G. MORSE, *Clerk.*

Worcester. — 33 Highland Street.

DANIEL SCOTT,¹ *Foreman.*

M. D. FITZGERALD, *Clerk.*

Fall River. — 19 Stafford Road.

LAWRENCE P. MANNIX,¹ *Foreman.*

JOSEPH A. DENNIS, *Clerk.*

Chair reseating and broom making are the chief industries of these four shops, which employ only men.

VII. SHOP SCHOOLS AND INDUSTRIAL CLASSES.

Instruction in chair seating and broom making is given to a limited number of pupils, with a view to home or shop employment in these industries; also in rug, mop, broom making, willow-ware making and in art fabric weaving, as vacancies occur in the various workshops and as the business expands.

VIII. STATE HOME TEACHERS.

JOHN VARS.¹

LILLIAN R. GARSIDE.¹

EDWARD E. SCHUERER.¹

MARY E. ROBERTS.¹

MARY F. GRIEVE.¹

¹ Blind or partially blind workers.

REPORT.

To His Excellency the Governor and the Honorable the Members of the Council.

GENTLEMEN: — The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind begs leave to submit the following report covering the fiscal year ended Nov. 30, 1919, under the act creating it (chapter 385, Acts of 1906) and the act reorganizing it (chapter 266, General Acts of 1918).

Since the cessation of hostilities, the work of the Commission has been able to go back in a large measure to normal, pre-war conditions. And yet in common with workers in other fields, we feel that we have gained from the war a larger conception of our work and our relation to the public. The country conceived it to be its duty not only to pay off its returned soldiers and sailors, but by grants of money and educational and other aid to see that returned men shall meet with success after they have left the service. We feel the same increased responsibility in our work. *The blind must succeed. It is the function of the Commission to see that they do succeed.* Not only must they be enabled to hold their own, but they must be helped to a position which demands full exercise of their powers, which is an essential condition of a happy and harmonious life.

Unfortunately, the attitude of the public has in the past made this difficult. Cases are common where a blind person has been unable to use his natural and trained abilities because of a curious prejudice on the part of the seeing. It may be a concert performer, whose undoubted gifts would draw large halls were she sighted. It may be a machinist, whose employer is suspicious that he is not getting full value for his money. We feel that such things should rarely happen, and that they are preventable. It is necessary to educate the public to the fact that there are many occupations where sight is not necessary. With this education will come the realization that a blind person is not to be approached and thought of in a spirit of mingled pity and awe, but that, except for the loss of his sight,

he may be an entirely normal individual, whose knowledge of the outside world is often as keen as that of the seeing.

This conception of the blind as normal except for the lack of one of the senses is having a far-reaching effect on the spirit of the work of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind and other similar bodies. Our whole policy is shaped to-day on the assumption that a person who suffers merely from lack of sight may be trained to work in straight competition with the sighted. If he is otherwise normal, his handicap of blindness may by modern methods of instruction be reduced to a minimum. We are then left with those who labor under additional disadvantages, such as deafness, lameness, or other disabilities. The Commission is beginning to adopt the policy of leaving as far as possible the special shop industries it conducts to such individuals. This indicates a distinct change of attack. Before the theory of the work was as well developed as it is to-day, the blind were generally assigned to an industry, with the result that there are now in our shops many who would be started upon totally different careers now. Some of our most valued workers among the blind are working in our shops, and nothing marks more clearly the progress that has been made than the difference between this work and the work that they would be trained for had the loss of their sight occurred to-day. We now aim to make the best and most discriminating use of the talents of each individual, taking each upon his own peculiar abilities, giving to the merely blind, but otherwise normal, man training to fit him for direct competition with the seeing, and helping those who are further handicapped with work in the Commission's shops.

A feature of this year has been an attempt to meet and deal with the complaints of blind workers. Nothing is so fatal to morale in industry as the lack of opportunity for free ventilation of grievances, and shop committees and other schemes have been devised to help with this difficulty. Thanks to a system which has been introduced in our workshop, the innumerable complaints of previous years have been brought to the irreducible minimum.

Prompt action has been taken in all cases brought up. The question of wages, which previously caused the greatest discon-

tent, has been in many instances carefully considered, and in no case has a worker been refused the departmental maximum for the type of work done. Where this was insufficient to meet the high cost of living, definite needs have been subsidized.

A system of vocational guidance has been inaugurated in the shops. Attention has been paid to the development of the capabilities of the workmen. Not only have men been given definite tasks, but they have been watched in their performance of those tasks, and an endeavor has been made to see where the strong points of the individual lie. If a man did not seem to be employed to best advantage in one department, he was transferred to another, and so on until he found the place where he was happiest and where he was most productive. Boston is the home of vocational guidance for children. It is the aim of the Commission to make it the home of vocational guidance for the blind.

Particular attention has been paid to the man who because he has never had an opportunity seems down and out. This work of redeeming people, of turning liabilities into assets, of making men, we have regarded as one of our most important functions. Some of these stories of reclaiming men are as pathetic as anything in fiction.

There is the case of a man who, through misplaced kindness on the part of his relatives, sat in idleness for fifteen years. This isolation made him apathetic to everything except his immediate bodily needs. Through a tactful line of approach made on the entire household by one of our field workers, who is himself blind, this poor man was sent to our training school shop, and in two weeks had responded to work and was actually going to and from his boarding house to the shop without a guide.

There is the man of thirty-two who had spent eight of ten years in jail because of drunkenness. When he came to the Commission he wanted to get drunk so that he could get a bed for the night. His was a hard case, but the Commission does not consider that the care of the easy cases is the limit of its function. He was sent to the shop at Pittsfield, and now, four months later, he is considered an asset to the shop and is earning no less than \$30 a week. This is indeed a case of turning liabilities into assets. Mention should here be made of the re-

markable work of Mr. William L. Foley, himself blind, who is the manager at Pittsfield. Thanks to the inspirational qualities of his personality in awakening men and making citizens of them and to his skillful instruction in trades, the Commission is able to regard this part of the work, of which he has had charge, as one of the most important things of the year. The keynote of the whole work at Pittsfield is the awakening and putting new hearts into these broken members of society. Of secondary importance is the teaching of the trade, for that follows most times as a matter of course. When we think of such cases as that of the man who lived at the Cape in a shanty a few months ago and who is now making good as a self-respecting member of society, we cannot but think that the training school at Pittsfield is carrying on a most important and indeed indispensable work.

A few words will be in place with reference to the part played by the social worker. This worker has raised much money outside the Commission and has thus performed functions which the State could not properly undertake. Together with the gathering and writing of items for the history sheets of individual blind men in our various shops, several other lists of service have naturally been linked up into what might be termed a "welfare" group of service detail. Outside the shop, where occasion required, there has been visitation of men at their homes in case of absence from work, so as to insure adequate care of the sick. Many hospital appointments have been made. Service has been rendered a number of men in finding lodging places and executing a very miscellaneous variety of errands where their handicap made it difficult for them to attend. The object is to establish a feeling of friendship with the blind, and, judging from the results we have seen, the motto which has been adopted, "A friendly word with every cheek," certainly is an appropriate one.

An interesting innovation was made during the last year in the form of an appropriation of \$10,000 for relief. The resolve in question reads as follows:—

Resolved, That the commission for the blind may expend during the current fiscal year, to the extent that an appropriation is made therefor by the general court, a sum not exceeding ten thousand dollars for the relief of blind and needy persons who are, at the date of passage of this resolve legal residents of the commonwealth . . .



Pittsfield shop. Making brooms.

This enables the Commission to deal with a peculiarly difficult problem that always occurs in connection with work among the blind, namely, the question of the blind mendicant. In accordance with the resolve quoted the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind has offered assistance to all blind mendicants in the State on condition that they should come off the streets. The result was startling. Some, indeed, responded, but others actually refused on the ground that they were getting a good living! When a man is obtaining from \$25 to \$50 a week by begging, it is obvious that he would prefer to remain where he is rather than accept the small sum that can be offered him by the State. So long as the public continues to support such people on charity and misplaced sympathy, it will be difficult for any commission to remove them from the street. The general public obtains a wrong impression of the blind from such men, who are the most spectacular but the least in number of all the blind.

The large majority of our blind neither are in need of nor demand relief on a charity basis. This was shown by the investigation conducted by the Commission this year, where it has been proved that a large proportion are not in want. The blind do not ask for charity. Many returned unfilled the forms of application which had been sent them, with the request that the Commission send the money to those being in greater need. One wrote in substance: "Thank you for your intention and attention, but not until necessary can I accept State relief." Those who did accept were in real need and they accepted most gratefully. Many touching letters were received, showing that the recipients really understood thoroughly the purpose of the relief. This magnificent spirit of independence it is the object of the Commission to cherish and preserve, and to see that charity does not foster pauperism. The money given is to be, and is understood to be, an assistance granted by the Commonwealth to offset a handicap. In general, the Commission is against a State pension for the blind, believing that this would be harmful rather than helpful for those with whom it is working. Such a pension would likely be indiscriminate and would go directly against the policy adopted with regard to our relief funds, the principle of which was to award money only on need, taking each case carefully on its own account.

Our enumeration, begun in 1918, has been completed this year, covering the entire State. We thus have for Massachusetts a register which it will be the endeavor of the Commission to maintain complete and up to date in the future. By thus keeping in continuous touch with the individual blind all over the State, by working on new occupations for blind people in competition with the seeing, by establishing a thorough system of training in our shops and developing the special capabilities of workers, and by keeping on the watch for the social, medical and special educational needs of the blind, and at the same time providing relief with strict discrimination, the Commission feels that the Commonwealth is doing a real work among its blind.

SUMMARY OF CASES OF BLINDNESS IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF
MASSACHUSETTS.

Register of the blind, before investigation,	8,931		
1915 census cases (not registered),	824		
New cases (reported during investigation),	394		
	<hr/>	10,149	
Died,	2,938		
Not blind,	1,093		
Out of town,	801		
Out of State,	183		
Duplicate names,	95		
Unable to locate,	1,341		
	<hr/>	6,451	
After investigation, active cases,		<hr/>	3,698
Adults:			
Self-supporting,	1,084		
Housewife,	202		
Cared for in sanatoriums,	8		
Homes for the blind and aged,	85		
	<hr/>	1,379	
Partially self-supporting,	385		
Receiving pension,	118		
	<hr/>	503	
Dependent upon relatives and friends,	767		
Dependent upon private aid,	22		
Mendicant,	8		
	<hr/>	797	
Inmate of almshouse,	246		
Inmate of State institution,	97		
	<hr/>	343	
		<hr/>	3,022

Children: —

Attending Perkins and other institutions,	226	
Attending Blind Babies Nursery,	19	
Attending (or recommended for) sight-saving classes,	170	
Attending public school with difficulty,	179	
Unable to attend school for various reasons,	82	
	<hr/>	676
		<hr/>
		3,698
Home teacher secured for,	87	
Blind and deaf,	39	
Traced to new addresses,	551	
Cases never before investigated,	2,741	
Blind,	1,875	
Partially blind,	1,266	
Seriously defective sight,	557	
	<hr/>	3,698

Summary of Ages.

AGES (YEARS).	Number.	Percentage.
0 to 5,	58	.02
6 to 20,	726	.20
21 to 50,	996	.27
51 to 70,	976	.26
Over 70,	942	.25
	<hr/>	
	3,698	1.00

Before investigation, cases of blindness,	9,755	
Died, not blind, removed, unable to locate, etc.,	6,451	
	<hr/>	3,304
New cases reported during investigation,	394	
	<hr/>	3,698

A decrease of 6,057 cases, or 62 per cent.

Total population of State (1915 census), 3,693,310

Before investigation, per cent of blindness of total population, .0026+

After investigation, per cent of blindness of total population, .0010+

PROPOSED LEGISLATION.

In the last report of the Commission it was pointed out that there is great need of some sort of relief which will offset the special disabilities of some of the blind in the struggle for a livelihood. As a preliminary inquiry, forms were sent to all persons on our register, excepting minors and those living in institutions, with the result that 498 persons, or about 20 per cent, were judged in need of relief.

Nothing can be more indicative of the spirit of the blind than the fact that the large majority did not wish aid, actually refusing to represent themselves as in need of State help.

In order to help those who, by their own admission and by our investigation, should receive financial assistance \$75,000 will be necessary. This recommendation is not to be considered as a request for any appropriation of money, the financial estimates having been heretofore filed with the Supervisor of Administration in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and statutes of the Commonwealth dealing with the budget.

A bill, entitled "An Act to extend the powers of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind," has already been filed with the Secretary of State, which, if acted upon favorably, will enable the Commission to grant relief to those who are in need.

PUBLICITY.

The agent for the prevention of blindness has during the last year given no less than seventy-four talks in thirty-six cities and towns, stretching from the Cape to the Berkshires. Visits have been made to a number of schools, factories, clubs and other associations, religious and otherwise, and the results of the whole campaign have been very marked. As a result of work of this kind, the attitude of the public is becoming more wholesome and practical and cases of blindness are being more promptly reported. More tangible results have been the finding of employment for individuals and the personal assistance given to the blind.

VOLUNTEER SERVICE.

An important supplement to the work of the Commission continues to be found in volunteer endeavor. The assistance thus given is indeed invaluable and takes so many forms that enumeration is impossible. Special mention may perhaps be made of those who have given their services as guide, readers, teachers of Braille, and those who have contributed gifts of money and clothes to individual blind persons.

PENSION REPORT OF SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF CIVIL WAR VETERANS.

It was learned that there were a certain number of blind persons in Massachusetts — sons and daughters of Civil War veterans — who were not receiving pensions. The cases of 6 persons eligible to receive pensions by reason of their fathers' service during the Civil War were brought before Congress; also a list of names of 15 persons who would be eligible under a proposed amendment which is now before Congress. This amendment, if passed, will grant blind children of Civil War veterans throughout the country a pension, regardless of the age at which they became blind. As the law now reads, to be eligible for this pension blindness must occur prior to the age of sixteen years.

It was discovered that there were 3 blind persons holding national pension certificates who were not receiving State aid, to which they were entitled. When this was called to the attention of the proper authorities, State aid was granted to the extent of \$6 a month. The Commission discovered a Civil War veteran, totally blind, who was not receiving his due allotment. His case was also referred, and he is now receiving the \$8 a month for which the Commission asked. There are 2 other cases which are in the hands of their respective Congressmen.

SALESROOM.

The salesroom, located on the floor with the Commission offices, affords an opportunity for visitors and those interested in the blind to see the products of the blind, especially those of home manufacture.

Few blind persons in their homes have any means of dis-

posing of their goods other than through the salesroom, where are accepted on consignment knitted and crocheted articles, reed baskets and cabinet work, if, and this cannot be too fully emphasized, the finished article is up to the required standard. Our standard is high and must be maintained if the work is to go on successfully; persons in the seclusion of their homes cannot always appreciate the necessity of this as they do not come in contact with the buying public, without whom business cannot survive. In addition to the above-mentioned consigned articles the home workers do excellent machine stitching on the practical household supplies, making a variety of bags, aprons, cleaning cloths, towels, ironing board covers, holders, takers, etc. All these goods are sold during the year through the salesroom, women's clubs, summer hotels, and occasionally through an exhibit and sale in a store. Art fabrics from the Woolson House shop are also sold in the salesroom.

SALES.

The marketing of the products of our industries, extending as it does all over the United States, has resulted in educating some other States to the ability of their blind citizens and to their employment in remunerative occupations. During the past year the sales of the output of the shops for the blind have not been stimulated by the great war. But notwithstanding changed conditions in the business world, the demand for the products of our shops has been constant. The hall and bedroom cotton rugs have appealed to discriminating rug buyers of many leading stores, resulting in an increased demand for rugs. The confusion caused by competition of similar mops on the market has in some degree retarded the demand for "Wundermops." The same degree of excellence applies to the output of the basket shop as to the manufacture of rugs and mops. The basket product is of wide variety, from the lady's delicate work basket to the strong, rugged, rattan butchers basket. The salesman is thus enabled to solicit business in a wider field.

HOME TEACHING.

The importance of this department cannot be too forcibly emphasized. The home teacher who is blind not only gives instruction in reading and writing of Braille, sewing, and other

hand work, but it is he who gets hold of the newly blinded persons and helps show the method by which readjustment is possible with the world.

STATISTICS OF THE HOME TEACHING DEPARTMENT.

Pupil's Statistics.

Number of pupils enrolled Nov. 1, 1918,	136
Number of new cases taken on during the time,	112
Number of old pupils returning for more help,	29
Total enrollment,	277
Number of pupils finishing work,	130
Amount of money earned by pupils during year,	\$1,386 21

Teacher's Statistics.

Number of calls made,	1,870
Number of lessons given,	2,488
Number of letters written,	837
Number of cards written,	524
Number of hours spent in preparation,	2,186
Number of hours spent in travel,	3,598
Number of hours spent in teaching,	2,781
Number of miles traveled,	31,768

LOCAL SHOPS.

In the local shops progress has been very satisfactory during the last year. Fall River reports a volume of business that will necessitate expansion in the near future, and Worcester, in noting similar conditions, comments on the splendid spirit among the men. Conditions are unchanged at Lowell. The work at these shops suffers from a disadvantage which was revealed by the census recently taken.

EMPLOYMENT IN SUBSIDIZED SHOPS.

CAMBRIDGE INDUSTRIES.

Broom Department.

During the year the workroom in this department has been reconstructed and the machinery entirely rearranged. The work was done last June when the department was shut down for two weeks, giving the men their annual vacation all at one time. This rearrangement has proved to be of great benefit.

While the building occupied by this department is not what it should be, still we now have a workroom that will compare favorably with any of its kind in New England. The efficiency of the men has been greatly improved, and the output has been increased over 40 per cent.

During the year the department for making street brooms has been revived. This is rapidly advancing from the initial stage and should in the near future give employment to a larger number of blind workers.

The success of a broom department hinges on a quick and ready market for the finished product. The Commission for the Blind has been very successful this year, having sold more than \$60,000 worth of brooms made in the Cambridge shop. This, no doubt, was due to the excellent quality produced. In all cases these goods have been sold on merit. We can sell all the mill and factory brooms we can produce if we maintain our present high standard. Chapter 141 of the General Acts of 1918, which makes it compulsory for public institutions to buy the products of the blind, will open up a market for our high-grade house brooms.

Although it is compulsory for public institutions to purchase these articles from us, it is the aim of the Commission to gain the co-operation of these institutions by furnishing them with an article second to none on the market at prevailing market prices.

Although our sales this year are not as heavy as those for 1918 by several thousand dollars, this can be attributed to the drop in prices and the fact that the greater portion of the business of 1918 was war contracts from the United States army.

With a quick and ready market such as we have now established for our mill and factory brooms, and with public institutions taking practically all our high-grade house brooms, the success of the broom department is assured, and we look to 1920 as likely to be a banner year for this department.

We have discontinued during the year the rattan and the dowel departments, because we found they were only feasible during the prevalence of war-time conditions.

Willow Department.

In the willow shop during the year the largest item of output has been the large rattan butcher basket. There have also been a larger number of wool skips and laundry baskets than in previous years. The volume of household articles has been about as usual, including window baskets, wood baskets, wood stands, sleeping baskets and bassinets. Suitable willow has been scarce in the market, and it has been very fortunate for us that the crop of willow on land rented by us in Lexington came through well both in quantity and quality. The blind working force has consisted of fourteen men, not including three who spend a few days in the shop to try out their adaptability for this line of work. The unfilled orders on our books are for a thousand butcher baskets and a considerable number of household articles for the Christmas trade. The outlook for willow ware is good and we have an increasing demand. In adding new articles to our list of specialties, the willow tables will be, in our judgment, the best line to develop. When new men are added to the blind working force they should be active and willing to take the time to learn the trade. A seeing man in this industry is required to serve three years' apprenticeship before he is able to become a first-class workman, therefore it is only to be expected that a blind apprentice should serve the same length of time before he becomes able to earn a good wage. The ultimate rate of pay should be as high as in any of the other shops. It is also very desirable that we plant more willow, and we have made a proposition to the Metropolitan Park Commission, who have undeveloped land near North Cambridge that would be very suitable for this purpose. This department is very much handicapped for working space, which impedes the growth otherwise possible.

Rug Department.

During the past year it has been necessary to discontinue the manufacture of the "Cambridge rugs," owing to the scarcity of new cotton goods and advanced price. The rug department has been making a fabric which is called the "hall and bedroom rug," an article which met with instant success with the rug

trade. These rugs are distributed among the rug departments of the leading stores in the country and are found to be most satisfactory. They are woven in two-tone colors in assortments of fifteen different colors. During the season of 1918 we employed in the department eighteen workers, while during this past year this number has been increased to thirty. The added number of operations in the manufacture of this rug combined with the increase of sales are the reasons for this growth. The product of this department is sold in advance up to April of the coming year, with every indication that the season will be a record both in sales and in employment of the blind.

Wundermop Department.

The output of this shop for the past year has also been satisfactory, showing a slight increase over 1917 and 1918, in which years practically 25 per cent of the orders were war-time orders, while during 1919 the business has been of a strictly commercial output, showing an increase of approximately 30 per cent over any previous year. There have been ten operators employed continuously, and although the output has continuously increased, the number of operators has remained the same, owing to the increased efficiency of the workmen in this department.

Woolson House Industries.

The shop numbers at present as follows: 5 weavers, 6 caners, 1 telephone operator and 3 apprentices in caning.

During the year, in addition to the apprentices mentioned above, two others have been tried out in caning and dropped. They have been allowed to continue their connection with the shop, however, although not as apprentices. These girls were incapable of receiving industrial training, but they were extremely happy to be there and the Commission thought best to allow them to remain. Two of the weavers have left during the year, also one regular caner. The deaf-blind worker on braided rugs has also been removed as she was in a physically rundown condition and seriously needed a change of environment. This branch of the work has been discontinued, for the time being. The shop has also served one outside worker by teaching her chair caning, which she will use in teaching occu-

<i>Causes of Blindness.</i>		<i>Cases.</i>
Glaucoma,		26
High Myopia,		13
Blocked Pupil,		11
Cataract,		10
Uveitis,		7
Optic Atrophy,		6
Keratitis,		4
Corneal Opacities,		6
Trachoma,		3
Iridocyclitis,		4
Old age (?),		2
Chronic Neuritis,		1
Separated Retina,		1
Sympathetic Ophthalmia,		1
Anterior Sclerosis of Retinal Vessel,		1
Disorganized Globe,		1
Ptosis,		1
Central Choroiditis,		1
Hyperphoria,		1
Buphthalmos,		1
Retinitis Pigmentosa,		1
Ectropion,		1
Keratoconus,		1
Chorio Retinitis Posterior Staphyloma,		1
Panophthalmitis,		1
Vitreous Opacities,		1
Micro Cornea,		1
Chronic Dacryocystitis,		1

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DEFINITION OF BLINDNESS.

It may be well to repeat here the definition of blindness as thus far understood by this Commission. While a case would never be refused consideration on a technicality, it is generally agreed that all persons with vision of 20/200 (one-tenth of normal) or less, and that school children with 20/70 vision or less are reportable to this office. In other words, all persons whose sight is responsible for preventing education or employment under the usual conditions for seeing persons may properly be referred to a Commission for the Blind.

CIVIL SERVICE AND THE BLIND.

We are glad to report that as the result of our representations the civil service authorities of Massachusetts now allow blind persons who are qualified as dictaphone operators to compete for civil service positions. Thus yet another barrier between the blind and the seeing has been thrown down.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES.

The Commission has registered, during the fiscal year 1918-19, 6,875 persons, 635 of whom were reported for the first time. Service has been rendered to 3,545 individuals, many of whom have been helped in several ways, as follows: —

1. Training has been given or expenses provided during training to	317
2. Employment has been given or secured for	264
3. Home industry, fostered by loans, equipment, use of salesroom, provision of guide, etc., for	139
4. Information and advice on medical care, special education, occupations, relief, Federal pensions, boarding places, etc., has been given to	1,777
5. Reported to general agencies,	139
6. Recreations, symphony and other concerts, outings, vacations, gifts, music transcription, etc., have been given by others through the Commission to	393
7. Relief (for approximately three months) has been granted to	291
8. Died, not blind, unable to locate, out of State, etc.,	3,180

EMPLOYMENT IN COMPETITION WITH THE SEEING.

The work which the Commission has been doing in finding employment for the blind desiring to work in competition with the seeing is shown in the report from Miss Florence W. Birchard, who is in charge of that department, and it is considered of such importance that it is given in full in the special report.

INDUSTRIAL SUMMARY.

The following industrial summary gives a relative idea of the growth of the work and the cash return to the blind: —

YEAR.	State Appropriation.	Number benefited.	Number given Industrial Training.	Number benefited by Home Teaching.	Number employed regularly in Commission's Shops.	Number securing Positions in Competition with Seeing.	Earnings of Blind in Commission's Shops (Salesroom and Staff).	Paid to Blind for Relief.	Total Sales.
1906-07.	\$40,000 00	464	57	-	68	-	\$8,353 82	-	\$21,612 97
1907-08.	40,000 00	392	77	-	84	-	13,769 98	-	18,751 79
1908-09.	45,000 00	380	40	-	86	-	19,592 52	-	34,669 40
1909-10.	45,000 00	400	39	-	96	-	25,050 53	-	53,029 50
1910-11.	50,000 00	464	42	-	90	-	29,544 92	-	67,331 98
1911-12.	57,781 04	584	28	-	99	-	35,183 17	-	54,592 56
1912-13.	65,090 00	690	26	-	112	-	40,513 33	-	55,556 24
1913-14.	67,000 00	750	20	-	113	-	42,205 55	-	59,737 43
1914-15.	67,005 45	800	22	-	113	-	45,010 04	-	75,671 06
1915-16.	71,210 23	1,043	32	-	132	-	50,359 82	-	88,692 18
1916-17.	91,670 36	1,046	18	246	143	-	63,108 40	-	161,773 72
1917-18.	108,081 20	2,912	87	274	158	-	76,181 37	-	215,845 29
1918-19.	134,122 75	3,545	39	277	163	69	91,034 79	\$10,000 00	223,633 82

FINANCIAL REPORT.

Following is the financial report. The total appropriation for the year ending Nov. 29, 1919, amounted to \$134,622.73. Through the appropriation the blind were enabled to earn \$91,034.79. The expenditure in the form of relief was \$10,000, and \$9,246.60 helped in the establishment of fifteen classes for the conservation of eyesight among children.

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES, DEC. 1, 1918, TO NOV. 29, 1919, INCLUSIVE.

Receipts.

Appropriation for general expense,	\$53,456 13
Appropriation for industries,	53,500 00
Appropriation for State home teachers,	7,920 00
Appropriation for investigation of relief,	500 00
Appropriation for relief,	10,000 00
Appropriation for sight-saving classes,	9,246 60
Receipts at local shops (Fall River, Pittsfield, Lowell, Worcester), .	33,885 58
Receipts for sales of home work,	2,751 29
Receipts at Cambridge (industries and salesroom),	189,575 85
Refunds on equipment,	365 28
	<hr/>
	\$361,200 73

Expenditures.

Payroll, seeing: —

Administration,	\$11,797 55
Local shops,	2,784 22
Industries,	24,109 15
Home teachers (clerks),	34 25
Investigation (stenographers),	384 60
	<hr/>
	\$39,109 77

Payroll, blind: —

Administration,	\$5,189 51
Local shops and special,	16,338 12
Bonus to blind,	2,146 67
Home work department,	694 98
Home work commissions,	4 87
Home work consignments,	1,077 14
Industries,	61,383 47
Home teachers,	4,200 03
	<hr/>
	91,034 79

Relief to needy blind (291 benefited),	10,000 00
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Sight saving classes (15 classes),	9,246 60
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Merchandise: —

General appropriation (local shops),	\$23,888 98
Home work department,	1,499 54
Industrial department,	147,953 25
Home teachers for pupils,	179 68
	<hr/>
	173,521 45

<i>Amount carried forward,</i>	\$322,912 61
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<i>Amount brought forward,</i>	\$322,912 61
Equipment:—	
General appropriation,	\$405 70
Industries,	1,103 22
	<hr/>
	1,508 92
Tuition in speeial schools,	189 60
Services of guides:—	
General appropriation,	\$5,743 90
Home teachers,	1,167 00
	<hr/>
	6,910 90
Board of apprentices and pupils,	3,338 22
Rent, including heat and light:—	
Central office,	\$2,941 21
Local shops,	2,403 20
Industries,	7,874 08
	<hr/>
	13,218 49
General telephone:—	
Administration,	\$745 46
Local shops,	219 32
Industrial,	617 28
Home teachers,	35 95
	<hr/>
	1,618 01
Travel:—	
General appropriation,	\$2,784 88
Home teachers,	2,234 77
Industrial,	1,320 21
	<hr/>
	6,339 86
Items of general expense, expressage and teaming:—	
Local shops,	\$3,729 50
Industries,	7,778 21
	<hr/>
	11,507 71
Repairs and improvements:—	
Local shops,	\$524 88
Industrial,	2,479 06
	<hr/>
	3,003 94
Supplies:—	
Administration,	\$602 17
Local shops,	371 96
Industries,	2,738 64
Home teachers,	6 29
Investigation,	27 30
	<hr/>
	3,746 36
Postage:—	
Administration,	\$391 15
Local shops,	71 74
Home teachers,	62 03
Investigation,	60 00
Industries,	414 90
	<hr/>
	999 82
Printing:—	
Administration,	\$344 32
Local shops,	162 40
Investigation,	23 10
Industries,	586 95
	<hr/>
	1,116 77
<i>Amount carried forward,</i>	\$376,411 21

Amount brought forward, \$376,411 21

Sundries: —

Administration,	\$202 03	
Local shops,	466 46	
Investigation,	5 00	
Home work department,	192 26	
Industries,	1,243 39	
		<hr/>
		2,109 14
		<hr/>
		<u>\$378,520 35</u>

INDUSTRIAL DEPARTMENT.

Assets.

Cash, \$4,491 52

Accounts receivable: —

General,	\$21,640 14	
Special,	197 52	
Salesroom (new),	45 76	
		<hr/>
		21,883 42

Inventories: —

Woolson House industries,	\$3,194 32	
Rug shop,	7,958 92	
Mop shop,	11,569 50	
Broom shop,	12,975 33	
Willow shop,	1,900 30	
Dowel shop,	291 00	
Dish mop,	92 30	
Oriental rug,	40 00	
		<hr/>
		38,021 67

Equipment: —

Woolson House industries,	\$679 80	
Rug shop,	1,367 54	
Mop shop,	1,072 55	
Broom shop,	4,103 90	
Willow shop,	252 47	
Dowel shop,	838 69	
Salesroom,	427 06	
Equipment for experiments,	142 37	
		<hr/>
		8,884 38

\$73,280 99

Liabilities.

Accounts payable, 48,622 60

Net assets Nov. 29, 1919, \$24,658 39

Net assets Dec. 1, 1918, \$38,786 45

Appropriation for 1918-19, \$53,500 00

Advanced to home work department,	702 57	
		<hr/>
		52,797 43

\$91,583 88

Less net assets Nov. 29, 1919, 24,658 39

Cost of operation 1918-19, \$66,925 49

CONCLUSION.

In this report we have endeavored to show how the Commission has attempted to meet the intricate problems created by the first year of peace. We take the opportunity of expressing our gratitude for the loyal spirit of helpfulness which has been shown by all who are working with us, and we feel that we may count on their co-operation in a still more strenuous and effective year to come.

Respectfully submitted,

CHARLES B. HAYES,
EDWARD E. ALLEN,
WALTER B. SNOW,
JOHN P. REYNOLDS,
AGNES C. TAFF,
JOHN D. W. BODFISH,

Commission for the Blind.

SPECIAL REPORT



One of Boston's sight-saving classes.

SPECIAL REPORT.

WORK FOR CHILDREN.

IDA E. RIDGEWAY.

Total number of cases dealt with,	1,201
New cases,	265
Old cases,	936

This unusually large number of children is due to the fact that every child in the State who is on our register has been accounted for. The survey has brought out the following interesting facts: —

Blind children,	266
Children with seriously defective eyesight,	460
Children with improved vision whose names have been removed from our register,	305
Mentally abnormal with blindness or low vision,	60
Died,	20
Out of State,	13
Unable to locate,	77

About 1,000 children were visited and given advice in regard to medical care or education. Many of the 305 checked up as “not blind” have vision which might handicap in school work but does not impede them in the industry which they are now following.

SPECIAL EDUCATION.

Special education, including training and care at the Nursery for Blind Babies, Perkins Institution, State home teachers for the blind, admission to classes for conservation of vision or instruction by special methods in their regular classrooms, has been obtained for 113 children.

We have worked in co-operation with eighty-six outside agencies. For 57 children some special relief has been provided through funds controlled or raised by the Commission’s agents.

PREVENTION.

The very keynote to work for the blind is prevention. The service is twofold: to the blind, prevention of neglect, illiteracy and indigency; to the sighted, prevention of blindness or low vision.

WHAT CAN WE DO FOR THE BLIND CHILD?

We visit as soon as possible after he is reported in order to make sure that nothing has been neglected which might possibly give or restore any degree of eyesight, to learn the home environment and to give to the parents consolation and advice in the training of these little ones.

One cannot estimate the amount of harm to the blind child which may result from misdirected kindness in early life. A thirteen-year-old partly blind boy was brought to the attention of the Commission. His devoted parents, who looked upon him as an invalid, cut his food, buttoned his clothing, and laced his boots. He was taken to his classroom and called for at the close of school, and when he ventured out with the other boys normal play was checked and regulated to suit their afflicted companion. The result is a mental retardation which responds so slowly that we must consider the boy feeble-minded.

WHAT CAN WE DO FOR THE CHILD WITH LOW VISION?

Often children are erroneously reported to us as "partly blind" when they have one blind eye but normal vision in the other. First of all we make sure that refraction or surgery will not give practically normal vision. If inevitably the child belongs to the group with seriously defective eyesight, we now have classes for conservation of vision where he can be educated with a minimum of eyestrain.

The cause of eye defect is carefully explained to those responsible for the child's welfare. Near-sight, far-sight, astigmatism, cataracts, opacities of the cornea, — all require special precautions and instructions, and care may do much towards saving eyesight.

PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS.

Comparatively little blindness occurs during industrial life and we are not surprised at the failing vision of old age, but blindness in children is appalling. Toxic blindness following certain diseases of childhood may be unavoidable, but optic atrophy due to syphilis, also, ophthalmia neonatorum (both gonorrheal and non-gonorrheal), still lay claim to the eyesight of their innocent victims, — little children. One case of blindness from ophthalmia neonatorum was reported last year. Seven cases of optic atrophy due to inherited syphilis occurred suddenly in children between five and twelve years of age who had good sight until blindness came upon them. One little boy who was playing in the barn groped his way into the house declaring he could not see. His brother was afflicted in a similar way. We must impress the young men and women, the parents of the coming generation, with the value of clean thinking and living, and give to the general public more information concerning the hygiene of the eye, the most important organ of the human body. The supervisor of work for children last year gave twelve talks before groups representing public health workers, school nurses, school teachers, students in the school for social workers and women's clubs. Contributions of printed matter on sight saving have been circulated in papers and magazines.

SIGHT-SAVING CLASSES IN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

In October Chelsea opened the eleventh class in Massachusetts. Classes are ready to open in Brockton, Quincy, Lowell and Fall River. Surveys have been made of the low-visioned school children of four other cities. The grant of an annual appropriation of \$10,000 to help in carrying on this work is a real blessing to our children with poor eyesight, as it will help to give an education to those unfortunate ones for whom there has never before been any provision in the schools.

Enrolled in sight-saving classes,	148
Pending,	50

We hope gradually to provide for all children requiring special methods and equipment because of poor eyesight, and estimate that there are about 500 of these children in Massachusetts.

All those who have shared in the work for children appreciate the privilege of helping to save eyesight and of pointing the way to the light of knowledge to those for whom physical darkness is inevitable.

EMPLOYMENT IN COMPETITION WITH THE SEEING.

FLORENCE W. BIRCHARD.

The number of persons aided through this department during the year was 143. Of these, 74 are totally blind, 10 partially blind, having enough sight to see objects dimly, and 59 were defective sight cases. Twenty people of this number were working from placement made previous to Nov. 30, 1918, but still needed friendly supervision and aid in securing guide, boarding places, etc. Eighty-five new positions were found for 69 different people. Twenty positions were secured and refused for various reasons, — not enough pay, changed mind about wanting work, not suited for the sort of work offered, etc. Seventeen people, not placed, were given much time and attention, and survey visits were made in practically all industries within easy reach of their home. In this way it was ascertained that certain industrial centers, like Fall River, from the nature of their work seemed to have almost nothing to offer blind workers. Nov. 30, 1919, 92 people were employed, 11 are at school, 6 are at present physically unable to work, 3 are in training for dictaphone positions, 3 were needed to help at home with the housework, so do not want outside employment for the present, 3 have refused further aid in finding employment and are satisfied to remain idle. There are 32 waiting for employment. During the last week of November, 1919, the wage of 49 people known to the agent amounted to \$662 45. Ten of these earned from \$31 to \$18. Fifteen earned from \$17 to \$12. Twenty-one earned from \$11 to \$9, and 4 people were earning from \$8 to \$5.

The expense to the State for these 49 people was \$11 spent for guide services.

The following will give an idea of the varied sorts of employ-



Working in competition with the seeing. Closing small fuses, Merrill Manufacturing Company.

ment opened to our people: electrical companies, soles manufacturing, florist, guide, housework, attendant, nurse (this girl is totally blind, working in the Blind Babies Nursery in Boston), paper box company, rubber shoe company, dictaphone operating, telephone operating, shoe factories, leather factory, spectacle case manufacture, wrench company, envelope manufacture, corrugated paper factory, candy, toys, radio, wireless apparatus, paper cup manufacturing, ink, Packard motor, sporting goods company, laundry, salesmen, spark plug manufacturing, chain manufacturing, machine shop, piano parts, one man working on a large fruit farm and one on a poultry farm.

Eighty-three visits were made to factories in various parts of the State, Boston and vicinity, Lowell, Brockton, Fall River, Springfield, Milford and Hudson. Surveys were made in processes possible for blind workers, and, on the other hand, it was proved that certain other industries hold no openings for labor so handicapped. In nearly every case the superintendent of the factory showed co-operation which was most helpful and encouraging. This year proves more surely that the industrial world has a place for the blind man or woman who is physically and mentally normal except for lack of sight. It is very true that there are many difficulties to overcome, such as securing the services of adequate guides, but the result warrants the output of the endeavor necessary.

This department would like to express its gratitude for the help given by Perkins Institution in furnishing a part-time assistant as school agent for three very busy months, and to the intelligent and trained services of a volunteer worker, Mrs. W. H. Lord at the Hotel Somerset, who has made many of the factory surveys.

APPENDIX

A P P E N D I X .

WOOLSON HOUSE.

As the year draws to its close, we again wish to call the attention of the public to the Woolson House in Cambridge, its aim, activities and needs.

During the year some important changes have been made. In May Miss Mary Bradbury, who for many years was an efficient and conscientious matron of the house, tendered her resignation to take effect October 1, but owing to ill health was not able to continue the work and left May 28. Miss Howe, who on various occasions has ably substituted, came to the rescue and filled in the time between May 28 and July 15, when the new matron, Mrs. Helen E. Adams, arrived. Mrs. Adams is a bright, cheerful, energetic, capable woman, who is doing all in her power to make the home attractive and to improve conditions. During the year there have been 82 guests for one meal or more, 41 guests for one week or more and 19 in the regular family for a part of the year. In August the house was opened as usual for guests and everything done to entertain and give pleasure, the various guests helping with music, reminiscences, etc. Many letters of grateful appreciation have been received by Mrs. Adams. One lady writes:—

I have the satisfaction of feeling that the opportunities which I enjoyed were not such as to make my vacation wholly a time of recreation, but such as to make it one of improvement and accomplishment as well. Surely my life must have been enriched by the stories which you read to us and by the inspiring religious service which you made it possible for me to attend. The collection of Braille literature, too, was a source of profit and pleasure to me. Also, my work has been facilitated by my being able to do some of my Braille correspondence on a writer instead of a slate and stilus. If I am really deserving of this vacation, surely I should now begin work with redoubled enthusiasm, and I feel that this is what I am doing.

Through the kindness of Miss Fisher and others automobiles were provided each week during August to take the guests on pleasure trips and picnics. Two or three trips were made to Perkins Institution, Watertown, and very greatly enjoyed by all. Through the courtesy of Perkins Institution Braille books were furnished the guests. During the year, in response to an appeal in the "Boston Transcript," two donations of fruit and vegetables were sent in. Ten were present at the Thanksgiving festivities. During the summer Miss Lewis kindly entertained the guests with music Sunday afternoons, which they greatly enjoyed. Like any home, private or public, the Woolson House needs a certain amount of repairing and refurnishing to keep it in good condition. In the spring, through the kindness of Mr. Allen, the floors were all done over, making a great improvement to the general appearance of the house. At present there is great need of fresh paper and paint and this is to be done as soon as possible. Blind people are quite as sensitive to their surroundings as are seeing people and enjoy a home that is kept up and furnished in good taste and comfort. They are depressed or elated by the atmosphere about them and many or perhaps most blind people have a preference in color whether they have ever seen or not. The members of the Woolson House family are willing and eager to help in any way they can to raise money to improve and beautify the home. In November Mrs. Adams started a Shakespearian Club, which holds its meetings every week or two on Monday evenings. The pastor of the First Universalist Church of Cambridge, Mr. Wilson, and his wife, also Mrs. Pillsbury of the Emerson School have very kindly helped to make these evenings a success. Mrs. Adams reads to the family, acts as guide, and what is of tremendous importance, — a value to any blind woman, — has helped them very materially in remodeling their clothes. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" applies equally well to the girl. The women work hard all day in caning or weaving and should have diversion. This they get to a certain extent, but it is impossible for one person, no matter how willing, to guide three or four at the same time, especially if they wish to go in opposite directions. More guides are needed, guides who are responsible and who will be at the required place at the re-

quired time. It not infrequently happens that a woman will be all ready to start on a little trip for business or pleasure and wait all to no purpose for a guide who fails to show up. Through the very efficient work of Miss Mary Richardson, who spared neither time nor strength, a very satisfactory boarding place was found for one of the members of the family who had been at the Woolson House for many years and was in great need of a complete change and rest. She has greatly improved in health, and is a happy, busy member of the household where she is now living.

It is hoped that the good work will continue and that the public will generously respond to the work of the Woolson House.

FLORENCE M. PUDDEFOOT,

Secretary.

THE THOMAS PARK HOUSE.

The Thomas Park House, the club house for blind men in South Boston, has continued to be of wonderful value to our men. This house is supported by the Massachusetts Association for the Blind, and they feel, despite the increasing expense of maintenance, that this house is doing a most necessary and indispensable work.

The men come from all over the State to avail themselves of the recreation, entertainment, instructive talks that are given, and to patronize the store connected with the house, — in general, to enjoy the atmosphere of companionship and sociability that is always in evidence.

There are several rooms that can be used for lodgers and transient visitors. Men from other parts of the State find the opportunity of securing a room at a very reasonable rate a most helpful and convenient accommodation.

Perhaps the most valuable service rendered by this house is the providing of an opportunity for the newly blinded adult to have a place where he can go temporarily and just learn how to be blind. Several men who have lost their sight during the year have found this house a panacea for many discouragements and perplexities, and have left, after a few weeks' stay, with renewed vigor and energy and a determination to reclaim the place in life which they thought they had lost forever.

The Thomas Park House functions a most valuable work in the State, and is a most necessary and helpful supplement to the excellent work the Commonwealth is doing.

FRED V. WALSH,
Chairman, House Committee.

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMISSION RELATIVE TO
THE REGISTRATION, CARE AND RELIEF OF BLIND
PERSONS.

Boston, Jan. 10, 1920.

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth
of Massachusetts in General Court assembled.*

By the provisions of chapter 48 of the Resolves of 1919 a commission was created to investigate and consider all matters relative to the registration, care and relief of blind persons, and to report their findings thereon not later than Jan. 10, 1920.

The resolve is as follows: —

RESOLVE TO PROVIDE FOR TEMPORARY RELIEF OF THE NEEDY BLIND AND
FOR AN INVESTIGATION BY A SPECIAL COMMISSION RELATIVE TO
ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR BLIND PERSONS.

Resolved, That the commission for the blind may expend during the current fiscal year, to the extent that an appropriation is made therefor by the general court, a sum not exceeding ten thousand dollars for the relief of blind and needy persons who are, at the date of passage of this resolve, legal residents of the commonwealth; and be it further

Resolved, That the director of the said commission, the secretary of the state board of charity and the supervisor of administration are hereby constituted a special commission to investigate and consider all matters relative to the registration, care and relief of blind persons in the commonwealth and such other matters relative to said persons as the said special commission may deem pertinent to this inquiry, including the following questions: — The approximate number of blind persons now residing in the commonwealth and their age, sex, nationality, citizenship, place of residence, occupation and dependency; the advisability of establishing, by law or otherwise, any new methods for maintaining a complete and accurate registration of said persons; the need of new methods of financial and other relief through education, employment, institutional care or treatment, financial assistance or otherwise, and whether such relief should be borne by the commonwealth or by the cities and towns.

The commission is especially directed to consider the subject-matter of house bills numbered seven hundred and five and eleven hundred and forty-three of the current year, and to report upon the advisability of the legislation proposed therein and the estimated expense that would be entailed thereby.

All other boards and officials of the commonwealth and of the cities and towns are hereby directed to co-operate with the said special commission

and to assist it in procuring such information as it may require. The commission shall report its findings to the next general court not later than the tenth day of January, with such recommendations for legislation as it may deem appropriate, and may expend for the investigation such sums as may hereafter be appropriated therefor. [*Approved June 24, 1919.*]

In compliance with the foregoing directions the undersigned members of the said Commission submit their report, as follows:—

A careful examination has been made of all data in possession of the Commission for the Blind, now the Division of the Blind, Department of Education, and a questionnaire has been sent to all adult blind persons known to be within the limits of the Commonwealth. Sufficient funds not having been appropriated for the purpose of carrying out this resolve, it has been found impracticable to make a field survey or examination, and the above mentioned records and questionnaire are therefore depended upon as the basis for the statistics submitted in this report.

A blind person as understood in this report is one whose sight is so far defective as to prevent to a material degree his education or his self-support under usual conditions for seeing persons. The measurement of defect presupposed is that generally agreed upon by the medical profession and by authorities who are concerned with the care of the blind; *i.e.*, persons with vision one-tenth of normal or less are rated 20/200 and those with vision rating one-third of normal or less, 20/70.

There are 3,698 blind persons in Massachusetts. Of these, 390 are either minors or are persons under care in public institutions. A questionnaire was sent to each one of the remaining 3,308. Seven hundred thirty-eight, or 22 per cent, filled out the blank and made return. Three hundred thirty-eight recipients of the inquiry returned the blank with the comment "not in need," and 189 others returned without comment. The postal authorities returned 372 unclaimed; 71 were returned because the addressee had died; 20, with the notation "not blind;" and 11 marked "now out of State," making a total of 1,001, or 30 per cent, accounted for but not filled out. The remaining 48 per cent who are still unaccounted for are persons whose address was recently verified by the

13. Are you blind?.....

14. Is the blindness total or partial?.....
15. Are you blind in one eye, or both?.....
16. Can you see to read?.....
17. Can you go about the neighborhood without a guide?.....
18. Can you see well enough to recognize persons and objects?.....
19. Do you wear glasses?.....
20. Name of oculist or optician who furnished them.....
21. At what age did blindness occur?.....
22. What is the supposed cause of blindness?.....
23. Give the name and address of each physician who has treated your eyes in the last five years. If no treatment in past five years, the name and address of the last physician to treat your eyes.
24. What occupation do you follow for a living?.....
25. If employed by others state name and address of employer.
26. If not occupied at some useful employment, explain why not.
27. What was your income from your own labor last year? If possible, state it by months for the last twelve months.

January, 19	, \$.....	May, 19	, \$.....	September, 19	, \$.....
February, 19	, \$.....	June, 19	, \$.....	October, 19	, \$.....
March, 19	, \$.....	July, 19	, \$.....	November, 19	, \$.....
April, 19	, \$.....	August, 19	, \$.....	December, 19	, \$.....
28. What other income have you?.....
29. Do you own any real estate?.....If so, where.....
Income from it.....
30. Do you have any money in bank, if so, where and amount?.....
31. Do you give permission to some person authorized by the Commission to make inquiry on questions number 27 to 30, inclusive?.....
32. What aid has been given you during past twelve months by your children?.....
33. What aid has been given you during past twelve months by your parents?.....
34. What aid has been given you during past twelve months by your brothers and sisters?.....
35. Are your relatives unable, financially, to care for you?.....
36. Do you receive a pension of any sort?.....
If so, state amount and from whom.....
37. Explain your income, mentioning various sources of aid, and help in clothing, food and money from wife or husband, children, individuals, lodges, societies, Federal, county, State, city government, or from any other source.....
38. What is your present outstanding indebtedness?.....
39. State any other important facts you desire the Commission to know in passing on your case.....
40. Give names and addresses of three responsible persons who have known you since you have lost your eyesight.....

Signature of applicant.

We have heard the above read to.....
the applicant, and we witness his signature or mark.

Signature of Witnesses: {Address
 {Address

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS }
COUNTY OF..... } ss.

....., being first duly sworn, deposes and says
that each and all of the foregoing answers to the foregoing questions are true and
correct to the best of.....knowledge and belief.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this.....day of.....19 ,
My commission expires.....

.....
Notary Public.

(Seal)

(Copy of Communication.)

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND, 4 PARK STREET, BOSTON.

The Massachusetts Legislature has recently appropriated a comparatively small sum of money for the relief of the needy blind.

If you care to make application for any of this money, will you kindly do so on the enclosed application, and your case will be given consideration. All remarks will be treated as absolutely confidential.

If you feel that it is not necessary to apply for this relief, we would consider it a great favor if you would return the application to this office.

Yours very truly,

CHARLES B. HAYES,
Director.

P.S. Do not fail to have your application sworn to before a notary public.

From an examination of the answers returned to the questionnaire and of the history records both of those making returns and of all others included in the total of 3,698 blind persons in Massachusetts, the age classification of the entire group is as follows: —

Summary of Ages of all Blind Persons in Massachusetts, 1919.

AGES (YEARS).	Number.	Percentage.
0 to 5,	58	.02
6 to 20,	728	.20
21 to 50,	996	.27
51 to 70,	976	.26
Over 70,	942	.25
	3,698	1.00

The complete information of the degree of blindness is not available. Records of the result of examination in all cases coming to the Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary

throw a good deal of light upon this point, however. Of 109 cases examined in 1919, 64 were totally blind; 23 showed the degree of defect represented by the figure 20/200, that is, one-tenth of normal vision; 10 were defective in the degree of 20/100, that is, one-fifth of normal vision; and 12 were defective to a less degree, but still reckoned as blind.

Complete data as to the causes of blindness are also not available, but the group of Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary cases with its carefully tabulated results is indicative of the actual situation that would probably be found if the same method of examination were to be applied to the entire group. The tabulation is as follows: —

Causes of Blindness.

	Cases.
Glaucoma,	28
High Myopia,	13
Blocked Pupil,	11
Cataract,	10
Uveitis,	7
Optic Atrophy,	6
Keratitis,	4
Corneal Opacities,	6
Trachoma,	3
Iridocyclitis,	4
Old age (?),	2
Chronic Neuritis,	1
Separated Retina,	1
Sympathetic Ophthalmia,	1
Anterior Sclerosis of Retinal Vessel,	1
Central Choroiditis,	1
Hyperphoria,	1
Buphthalmos,	1
Retinitis Pigmentosa,	1
Ectropion,	1
Keratoconus,	1
Chorio Retinitis Posterior Staphyloma,	1
Panophthalmitis,	1
Vitreous Opacities,	1
Micro Cornea,	1
Chronic Dacryocystitis,	1

The four great underlying causes are glaucoma, high myopia, blocked pupil and cataract. If the proportions due to these causes found among the examined cases were to be assumed for the whole number, the total due to glaucoma would be 26 per cent; to high myopia, 12 per cent; to blocked pupil, 10 per cent; and to inoperable cataract, 9 per cent.

It is of special interest to note the absence of any case of ophthalmia neonatorum. Though it appears from returns made to the Department of Health and to the Department of Public Welfare that children with discharging eyes are cared for every day in the 231 lying-in hospitals of Massachusetts, few cases of blindness from this cause are now appearing. The reason is undoubtedly the careful enforcement of the law requiring the use of a prophylactic in the eyes of these children at birth.

The field inquiries carried out by the Commission for the Blind during the year 1919 indicate uniform distribution of the blind throughout our population. The following tabulation is by counties: —

Barnstable County,	47
Berkshire County,	80
Bristol County,	343
Dukes County,	19
Essex County,	436
Franklin County,	42
Hampden County,	173
Hampshire County,	53
Middlesex County,	849
Nantucket County,	8
Norfolk County,	183
Plymouth County,	170
Suffolk County,	878
Worcester County,	417
	<hr/>
	3,698

It appears from the returns made in response to the questionnaire that 738 blind persons have applied for aid. Examination of all of these cases by the agents of the Commission for the Blind indicate that 498 of this number were in immediate need of assistance. Under the provisions of the resolve quoted above, the Commission for the Blind was authorized to extend

aid to needy blind persons who were legal residents of the Commonwealth at the time of passage of the measure, and an appropriation of \$10,000 was made for this purpose. Acting under such authority, the Commission has extended aid in 291 cases, amounting in all to \$10,000.

While it is possible in the absence of any extended field search that other blind persons in urgent need of relief might be found within the Commonwealth, it is unlikely that there is any considerable group of such persons within the limits of Massachusetts other than the group set out in the foregoing tabulation. So that for the purpose of considering the question of methods of relief for the blind, it may be reasonably assumed that there are not many more than 498 such persons in the Commonwealth.

Your commission is charged with the duty of examining into the subject-matter of House Bill No. 1143 of 1919, and to report upon the advisability of the legislation proposed therein and the estimated expense that would be entailed thereby. This bill, in effect, provides a pension for the blind, not exceeding \$10 per week to each person. If the number of blind persons in urgent need of relief be taken to be 498, and it be assumed, as it may fairly be so assumed, that the rate of assistance granted this year by the Commission for the Blind is a proper minimum for such relief, the cost of aiding these persons for a full year at the rates indicated would be \$64,556. If the maximum of \$10 a week were allowed, — and in the administration of such a law the natural tendency would be to move toward the maximum, — the total annual expenditure would be \$258,960. If, however, a pension system were established for this relief, the experience of Massachusetts would probably differ little, if at all, from that of other States in which a pension system is now in operation. Thus the State of Ohio, with a list of persons in receipt of pensions for the blind totaling about 4,000, granted aid in this form last year to the extent of \$400,000. The Ohio law extends relief not to exceed \$200 a year to “any person of either sex who, by reason of loss of eyesight, is unable to provide himself with the necessities of life, who has not sufficient means of his own to maintain himself, and who, unless relieved as authorized by these pro-

visions, would become a charge upon the public or upon those not required by law to support him," *provided* he shall have become blind in accordance with the terms of this definition while a resident of Ohio, and provided he shall have been a resident of the county for one year. (Ohio General Code, sections 2965 and 2966.)

A further provision regulating the amount and method of payment appears in an amendment to the General Code, enacted May 19, 1919 (108 O. L. Part 1, page 421): —

If the Board of County Commissioners be satisfied that the applicant is entitled to relief hereunder, said Board shall issue an order therefor in such sum as said Board finds needed, not to exceed two hundred dollars per annum, to be paid quarterly from the funds herein provided on the warrant of the county auditor, and such relief shall be in place of all other relief of a proper nature. . . .

The experience of the State of Maine is not greatly different. There, with a group of some 350 persons in receipt of pensions, there was expended last year a total of \$41,586. The rate is \$200 per annum.

That the amounts expended in these States are greatly in excess of the theoretical figure, which might be presupposed from an application of the provisions in House Bill No. 1143 to the actual number of the needy blind as found by this report, is due to the inevitable tendency of a pension system. A definite stipend set apart for persons of a given class with a legal provision that they shall have a right thereto if their eligibility be proved, gives rise to constantly increasing numbers of eligibles who, under some other form of relief, would find it more compatible with their self-respect and their own personal independence to support themselves, either in whole or in part. It is the opinion of your Commission that a pension system calling for local administration, as indicated in the House bill in question, analogous as it is to the method followed in the State of Ohio, would result in an expenditure not less in proportion to the total population of the Commonwealth than Ohio has been required to expend. That is to say, it is likely that aid under this House bill, if it were made law, would soon exceed \$1,423,240 per annum, which under the terms of the bill

would call for one-half or a total of \$711,620 from the treasury of the Commonwealth.

Your Commission believes, therefore, that the pension form of relief for the blind is, on the score of economy, inadvisable, and, as previously pointed out in the analysis of returns made to the questionnaires, it is further our belief that relief in the form of pensions is not generally demanded by the blind themselves. They want an opportunity to help themselves. If the community will come forward with a system which will help them over their handicap without discouraging their personal efforts at support, their personal ambition and their self-respect, — both of which qualities are remarkably demonstrated by our blind persons, — they will be far more content than with a method which makes dependents of them by discouraging self-help. The blind citizen of Massachusetts does not rate himself as an object of charity. He is unwilling to think of himself as a mere burden upon the community. He realizes his handicap through loss of sight, but he is all the more intense in the use of his other senses, and all that he demands in the main from the world is opportunity to make his way. This attitude on the part of the blind person ought not to be treated lightly. Whatever system is developed for his aid, and some system is assuredly necessary, it should take into account that desire for self-help. It should seek in its process to foster the blind person's willingness to help himself. It should, therefore, put opportunity in his way and guard him against the competition of seeing persons, where such competition would, because of his handicap, drive him beneath the line of self-support.

Massachusetts has already embarked upon a wise method of assisting its blind. It has offered commercial opportunity through the development of shops for the making of brooms, basketry, mops, rugs, and other articles. The results obtained fully justify the undertaking. The greatest need which the Commission for the Blind has met in carrying out its enterprises has been that of some auxiliary fund with which to aid the least able of the blind who are in its employ. Such a fund properly limited and carefully applied can be used to assist the blind without discouraging their desire to work for their own living, and it is in the opinion of this Commission the only

method through which aid can be given by the government to this group of persons without pauperization in the social sense of that term. Your Commission recommends, therefore, that provision be made for an annual appropriation to be expended through the Department of Education in its Division of the Blind as an auxiliary fund for aid to such blind persons as in the judgment of that department are in need of some additional relief in their work, whether it be in the shops established by the department, or elsewhere under the department's general supervision.

Your Commission is further called upon to consider the subject-matter of House Bill No. 705, which provides in effect for a system of registration through local registries and reports. Your Commission is of the opinion that the present system of registration for the blind in Massachusetts is adequate. There does not appear to be need for a record of blind persons to be kept by each city and town, nor to require the State department to file reports with every city and town on the new cases coming into their list. As no increase in efficiency would result from the proposed changes, your commission believes that House Bill No. 705 should not become law.

Respectfully submitted,

CHARLES B. HAYES,

*Director, Division of the Blind,
Department of Education.*

ROBERT W. KELSO,

Commissioner of Public Welfare.

THOMAS W. WHITE,

Supervisor of Administration.

